

an Israeli citizen I would view that as a serious threat to my security. And as a strong ally of Israel, I view that as a serious threat to the security—not only the security of Israel but the security of the Middle East.

That's why we are constantly working to remind our European friends, as well as Russia and other members of the U.N., we have an obligation to see if we can't work together to solve this issue diplomatically. That means to provide consequences to the Iranian Government if they continue to pursue a nuclear weapon, such as financial sanctions or economic sanctions. We want there to be a choice. We want people to see there's—you know, isolation, there's got a consequence to it, that there's a price that's paid for this kind of intransigence and these threatening tones.

And it's difficult work to keep the nations bound together to help deal with this issue diplomatically, but we have done a pretty good job so far. Now, whether or not they abandon their nuclear weapons program, we'll see. But at least we've got unanimity so far, speaking—at the U.N. Security Council—speaking pretty clearly that there will be consequences. And there are being—consequences; there's been some economic consequences beginning to affect the economy.

Look, the Iranian people don't need to live under this kind of conditions. These are proud people with a great tradition. Their Government can do better for them. And threatening the world has caused there to be isolation. And these good folks could have leadership that enables them to have a better economy and a better way of life, an economy and a way of life that really does—enriches their families, that gives them a better chance to succeed. But, no, this group of people have made a different alternative, and now our job is to make sure that we continue to keep the pressure on.

Listen, thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:51 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority; and President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran. Prime Minister Olmert referred to President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

## **Statement on Assistance to Israel**

*June 19, 2007*

I am strongly committed to Israel's security and viability as a Jewish state and to the maintenance of its qualitative military edge. During our meeting today, I told Prime Minister Olmert that I am committed to reaching a new 10-year agreement that will give Israel the increased assistance it requires to meet the new threats and challenges it faces. The work on this new agreement was launched during the Prime Minister's previous visit. I will send Under Secretary of State Nick Burns and an interagency team to Israel in July to lead discussions aimed at concluding an agreement soon.

NOTE: In his statement, the President referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel.

## **Remarks on the Nomination of Congressman James A. Nussle To Be Director of the Office of Management and Budget**

*June 19, 2007*

**The President.** Good afternoon. Welcome to the White House. I am here to say goodbye to a good friend and introduce the newest nominee to my Cabinet. Recently Rob Portman came and told me that after 14 years of public service in Washington, he's ready to head home to be with Jane and the family. I've known him for many years. There's no finer man in public service than Rob Portman. He's been a trusted adviser, and Laura and I am going to miss him.

Fortunately, we found a good man to succeed him. Today I'm pleased to announce my nomination of Jim Nussle to serve as Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

I'm proud to welcome Jim's wife, Karen, his mom and dad, Lori and Mark, and his mother-in-law, Eva Mae. Any man who invites his mother-in-law to a—[laughter]—has got to have good judgment. [Laughter] We're going to ask a lot of Jim, and I thank you all for supporting him in this.

The job of OMB Director is one of the most important in our Federal Government.

The Director has a central responsibility for implementing the full range of my administration's agenda, from defense programs that will keep the American people safe to energy initiatives that will break our dependence on foreign oil to tax policies that keep our economy growing and creating jobs.

In all these areas, the OMB Director works to ensure that the American people get good value for every tax dollar they send to Washington. Jim Nussle is the right man to take on these challenges. For 16 years, Jim represented the people of northeast Iowa in the United States Congress. As a Member of Congress, Jim was a strong advocate for fiscal discipline and a champion of tax cuts that allowed the American people to keep more of what they earn. In 2001, Jim became chairman of the House Budget Committee. As a leader in Congress, Jim showed he can work with Members of both sides of the aisle to get positive things done for America. Jim's name and knowledge command respect on Capitol Hill. And as OMB Director, he will use his expertise about the budget process to ensure that the taxpayers' money is spent with respect and with restraint.

In his new post, Jim will continue the important work carried out by Rob Portman. Over the past 2 years, Rob has served my administration in two important jobs. As the United States Trade Representative, Rob negotiated several new trade agreements and reenergized the Doha talks at the World Trade Organization.

And as OMB Director, he helped me achieve our goal of cutting the Federal deficit in half and doing it 3 years ahead of schedule. He's helped me put forward a plan to balance the budget by 2012 by restraining Federal spending and keeping our taxes low. He's put Democratic leaders in Congress on notice that I will veto bills with excessive levels of spending. He has led my administration's efforts to curb the use of congressional earmarks and implement reforms that will make the earmark process more transparent.

I thank Rob for his service and good advice and, most of all, his friendship. I want to tell his wife, Jane, that after 14 years of commuting to Washington, he's going to be back home in Ohio, especially on the weekends.

Rob is a tough act to follow, but that's why I picked Jim Nussle. He's a man of integrity, a man of vision, a man well-qualified to hold this job. I ask the Senate to act quickly on his nomination. When confirmed, he'll make an outstanding OMB Director.

Congratulations to you.

[At this point, Director-designate Nussle made brief remarks]

**The President.** Good job.

[Office of Management and Budget Director Robert J. Portman made brief remarks]

**The President.** Good job. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:49 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Director-designate Nussle and Director Portman.

## Statement on the Deaths of Firefighters in Charleston, South Carolina

June 19, 2007

Laura and I mourn the devastating loss of some of America's bravest. Our prayers are with the families and friends of nine firefighters from Charleston, South Carolina, who selflessly gave their own lives to protect their community. These firefighters were true heroes who demonstrated great skill and courage. Their unwavering commitment to their neighbors and to the city of Charleston is an inspiration to all Americans.

## Remarks at the Congressional Picnic

June 19, 2007

**The President.** Thank you all for coming. Laura and I welcome you to the South Lawn. This is an opportunity to thank the Members of Congress and their families for serving the United States.

First, I want to recognize the Speaker. Madam Speaker, thank you for joining us. It means a lot that you've come. I appreciate the leadership of the House and the Senate who have joined us. For all the wives and